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separating the resulting solution from the remaining solids.

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In addition, please add the following new claims:

14. (New) A process for recovering metal values including tantalum metal values and niobium metal values from a source material comprising tantalum, niobium and uranium metal values, the process comprising:

digesting the source material in a sulfuric acid solution comprising:
sulfuric acid;
a reducing agent; and
an additive comprising carbon;

for a period of time sufficient to solubilize tantalum metal values and niobium metal values and form an aqueous phase comprising solubilized tantalum metal values and niobium metal values, and a solid phase comprising uranium metal values;

heating the digestion mixture for a period of time sufficient to attain 75-95 °C; and
separating the resulting solution comprising tantalum metal values and niobium metal values from the remaining solids comprising uranium metal values.

15. (New) The process of claim 14 wherein the sulfuric acid solution further comprises hydrofluoric acid.

16. (New) The process of claim 14 wherein the reducing agent comprises iron, aluminum or mixtures thereof.

17. (New) The process of claim 16 wherein the additive comprises activated carbon.

The following Remarks are submitted in response to the Office Action mailed August 26, 1997.